

Hamilton County Climate Initiative
Meeting Topic: Energy
January 29, 2009
Colerain Township Senior Center
4300 Springdale Road
Colerain Township, Ohio 45251

Meeting Notes—Answers to:

Group #1:

What do you think about the information presented by the speakers?

- Not sufficient information on smart grids
- Interesting presentations—incentives
- Wish there were opportunities for competition
- Low vision—just repackaging
- Confusion of natural gas as a renewable resource
- The presentation was at level one—not deep enough on explanation of “savings”
- Could have spent time talking about solar and program for implementation
- Should have included feedback from communities—e.g. what can be done to help Duke
- Wyoming presentation could be improved
 - Total savings first, then go into details
 - Very easy to understand, take back and implement
 - Why should big users pay less per kwh? Perhaps there should be a gradual progressive increase cost with increase usage?

What do you think about the grad students’ green guides information?

- Provide the opportunity to get a deeper understanding of the topic
- Should be shorter—probably one page
- Council could come up with the top three things that could be done

What are local governments doing to promote energy efficiency, etc.?

- Use of low-flow shower heads (home owners)
- Aggregation with townships (Springfield and West Chester) getting a better price for gas and electricity
- Looking at changing street lights and traffic lights-Montgomery
- Purchasing an electric car-Montgomery
- Retrofit all city facilities-Montgomery
- Education opportunities for residents

What are the barriers to implementing these ideas?

- Limit of incentives
- City, townships, Villages, etc.
 - No real power to enforce
- How government help businesses
 - Go to four day school day to reduce heating and cooling cost
 - Reduce work week

Group #2:

What do you think about the information presented by the speakers?

- High interest in lighting
- How to get information out to the public about the smart grid?
- Coupons for CFLs (compact fluorescent lights) from Duke, distribute to community in several locations. Put locations on WEB site.
- Get info out about how to increase efficiency
- Like to know more about smart meters
- How will Duke subsidize losses as efficiency increases?
- Promote use of off-peak energy
- Like itemization on bills from Duke
- Differential charging for power
- More alternative heating and cooling methods—biomass

What are the barriers to implementing these ideas?

- Zoning—Pro & Con
- Education
- Business:
 - Education
 - Architects on board
 - Building Codes, with home builders
- Residents:
 - Education
 - Tax incentives
 - Make information simple in terms of money saved
 - Retrofitting older homes
 - Environmental Angie's List
 - Rebates from Duke to promote energy efficiency (new heaters, etc.)
 - Make buying efficient products simpler
 - Gap in why people don't use incentives
 - Make rebate system simpler

Group #3:

What do you think about the information presented by the speakers?

- Whether there is global warming or global cooling—act now to save money
- Energy going to be more expensive—take action now
- Smart Grid Innovation welcome:
 - Help monitor energy use
 - Help manage energy use
 - Help reduce energy use
- Concerns with technology:
 - More complex, more intrusive, expensive
- How do we deal with low-income people?
- How do we site new power plants—e.g. nuclear plants?
- How do you get customers to participate in energy reductions—3% is too low!!!
- Return on Investments
 - Need to set examples—actions, outreach/education
- Need proof government saving money by using LIDs
- Colerain—has links on WEB site to save energy
- Sharonville—currently evaluating what strategies to employ, attending Green Cities Conference in April 08 in Portland, OR
- Feeling frustration to hear Duke is frustrated with low level of adoption of energy efficiency methods
- Duke's CEO Rogers is promoting the idea of Sav-a-Watts—
 - Duke will sell not just “electrons”, but also energy efficiency
- Investing in renewable energy is uncertain—incentives are not assured like they are for oil, coal

What do you think about the grad students' green guides information?

- Actions look more practical than previous templates
- Transportation Green Guide seemed beyond reach
- Very direct and easy to implement within the existing structure—not more costs

Group #4:

What do you think about the information presented by the speakers?

- **Duke Energy** should have given more information on the “smart grid.”
- How does this technology work in old homes?
 - Ex. “My home is 80 years old, and the wiring throughout the house has never been renovated. How or would the smart grid still be able to work, and can it still read the amount of energy each specific outlet/appliance is using? Would an older house need renovated wiring?”

- **City of Wyoming Energy Initiative**
 - “It’s a no-brainer.”
- “It’s clearly worth the upstart costs.”
- All communities, townships, and cities in Hamilton County should adopt this plan. It saves the governments money, and is an example of better spending habits of the tax payers’ money.
- “How can a small-budget community afford the upstart costs for a program like this?”
- Can these types of programs be subsidized by higher level gov’ts, or Duke Energy?

What do you think about the grad students’ green guides information?

- Had not had a chance to review the information packet thoroughly.
- This information is part of a climate initiative—why is this not printed double sided to use half of the paper?
- Appears to be many good resources, and many we are sure to check out at home. However, some feel there is an information overload: Could the grad students select a narrower list, or maybe list top resources for 1. Residents, 2. Businesses, 3. Governments 4. Contractors, & Landlords?

What did we miss? What projects or programs are out there that we didn’t present?

- Duke Energy’s “Save-A-Watt” program. It should have been covered thoroughly by Duke employees because it is among the most useful program to today’s audience.

What are the barriers to implementing these ideas?

- Upstart costs
 - For programs like “City of Wyoming Energy Initiative”
 - For families and residents to switch out to more efficient products
 - For business to switch out to more efficient products
- Education of information, programs
- Ease of receiving these benefits
 - People don’t always do the research for these programs, even if they get \$\$ back
 - Possibly place info of qualifiable programs on the Duke Energy bill
 - Have local gov’t send list of qualifiable programs to businesses and residents

What can local governments do to promote energy efficiency, local energy production, energy retrofits for existing buildings, etc.?

- Make the list programs, grants, and such information about them easier to access, and apply for.
 - Newsletter, blog
- Hold some type of competition between neighbors to see who can reduce their energy consumption the most, or reduce more than their immediate neighbors.
 - Ask Duke to put the amount of energy used by your direct neighbors on your bill, and put a smiley face or “Green Leaf” icon next to the neighbors who used the lowest amount of energy
- Clearly illustrate the benefits of using less energy, and switching to lower consumptive products
- Hold a competition at the local elementary/middle school
 - Educate school children on how to be more energy conscious
 - Send kids home with information packets/homework to do with parents (so that parents are also educated)
 - Have a competition between kids or classes to see whos households can reduce their energy consumption the most over given periods of time

How can local governments influence business to optimize their energy usage?

- Use similar tactics as elaborated for question 1 above.
- Make the list programs, grants, and such and information about them easier to access for businesses, and how to apply for
 - Newsletter/blog
- Have a competition between neighboring businesses or businesses in the same business district
 - Compete with other business districts
- Award grant/money to those who reduce consumption the most, give a window sticker for “most reduction (by business)” or “most reduction (by business district)” from city
- Show how much money a business can save—they are always looking at the bottom line
- “Performance Contracting” – with Smart Grid technology from Duke to show where businesses are spending energy (& therefore amount of \$\$) and how to reduce
- Give cash credits to businesses that swap out the most inefficient products/

Group #5:

What do you think about the information presented by the speakers?

- Really enjoy them because we're in the area, but don't know a lot of what is going on.
- Lucky to have Duke in this area! Energy audits leave something to be desired, but it is the lowest of the low fruits.
- As an area, we need to reduce the energy consumption 40-60%. And this is available!
 - Remember that these things should improve the quality of life, not decrease it. There is a great opportunity here.
- Speakers themselves were good, content was limited.
- Good to see them coming out into the community and addressing the problems.
- Example was good for a quick, easy payback.
 - Clear, tangible.
 - Can be easily repeated in smaller communities.

What do you think about the grad students' green guides information?

- Table of contents on title page.
- Great resources! Sometimes we don't know where to go, where to start.
- Get them on website!
- There should be an actual presentation of Green Guides included on the agenda.
- Green Guides should be printed DOUBLE SIDED!!!

What did we miss? What projects or programs are out there that we didn't present?

- County should promote own website (www.hcdes.gov).
 - Has funding options.
- The Cincinnati climate change plan should be highlighted/explained.
 - It is one of the most comprehensive in the country.
- On finished website, they want an interactive map that you can click on municipality and see what each one is doing (check list for actions, and also, if there was a presentation on what they did). Maybe showing scale of each municipality and how much money they have saved (counter?).

What are the barriers to implementing these ideas?

- Political. This is a conservative area of the country, need to show \$\$\$ savings.
- Perception of change (people think you have to do everything, when in reality it can just be 1 at a time).
- Information overload.
- Educate WHOLE family (economic & environment).

- Lack of capital funds.
 - The budgeting process makes you choose between new lighting fixtures or a new community swimming pool. The pool will in every time.
 - The solution for this is “performance contracting” (\$\$ does not come out of general budget).

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